World Economic Forum Report on Tourism

2455. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that according to World Economic Forum India ranks 65 among 130 countries and on the safety it ranks 117;

(b) if so, what impact "Incredible India Campaign" has since its launch on the growth of tourism in the country;

(c) whether it is a fact that India ranks 7th in terms of its national resources alongwith America and France yet it's not a favourite destination for the tourists; and

(d) if so, what Government has done to make publicity of rich Indian cultural and natural heritage and improve security environment with the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2008 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) gives the ranks of 130 countries of the world, including India, based on a travel and tourism competitiveness index. As per this report, the overall rank of India is 65, while its rank in safety and security is 117.

(b) The Incredible India Campaign being undertaken regularly since 2002-03 has created greater awareness about India in the overseas markets. This campaign, in addition to other factors, has contributed to the continuous increase in number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) and foreign exchange earnings (FEE) from tourism, as may be seen from the figures given below:

Year	FTAs (in million)	FEE (US$ billion)
2003	2.72	4.46
2004	3.45	6.17
2005	3.92.	7.49
2006	4.45	8.93
2007*	5.00	11.62

*Provisional

(c) As per the WEF Report 2008, the rank of India in natural resources is 13, while those of USA and France are 2 and 47 respectively. The ranks of India, USA and France in respect of the indicator "number of world heritage natural sites" are 7,2 and 21 respectively. However, India has been ranked the most favourite country in the world in a survey undertaken by Conde Nast Traveller Magazine for their 2007 Readers' Travel Awards.

(d) To publicize the rich Indian cultural and natural heritage, the Government has adopted an integrated and promotional strategy and a synergized campaign in overseas markets. The Ministry of Tourism promotes and publicizes tourism products of the country through the print, electronic, internet and outdoor media. Information is also disseminated through promotional activities undertaken by the offices in the country and abroad.

Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, and the prevention of crime, including crimes against tourists, is the responsibility of State Governments/Union Territories. The Ministry of Tourism, therefore, asked State Governments and Union Territories to deploy tourist police at places frequented by tourists and ten States have already deployed tourist police at important tourist destinations. In a recent meeting with Secretaries of Tourism of States and Union Territories, it was emphasized that the safety and security of tourists is of paramount importance and State Governments/ Union Territories must ensure the same.

Sanction of fund for holy town of Sultanpur Lodhi

2456. SHRI NARESH GUJRAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has sanctioned any funds for the holy town of Sultanpur Lodhi where the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak, attained enlightenment;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government has also sanctioned any funds for other holy places in Punjab to promote religious tourism in the State?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned Rs. 94.12 lakh to the Government of Punjab for development of tourist facilities at Sultanpur Lodhi. The components of the project include improvement of the surroundings, parking facilities, toilet blocks, signage, Information Kiosk/rain shelter, drinking water fountain, refurbishment of the monuments.

(c) The Ministry of Tourism also sanctioned Rs. 5942.71 lakh to the Government of Punjab for 30 projects for the development and promotion of tourism including development of infrastructure at holy places in Punjab during Tenth and current Five Year Plan.

Tourist inflow in the country

2457. SHRIMATI JAYABACHCHAN: **Will** the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has drawn any projections for the tourist inflow in the country in the next financial year in view of the current turmoil in the global markets;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) the details of the strategy planned to meet and at the same time encourage the tourist inflow?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) The number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in 2008 is expected to be 5.57 million presuming that the growth rate in FTAs observed in 2007 over 2006 remains same in 2008 also.

The important efforts being made by the Government to encourage tourist inflow include integrated development of tourist infrastructure at tourist circuits and destinations, growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels, augmentation of air capacity, enhancing availability of skilled manpower, according greater focus in emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North-East Asia and South-East Asia, and international publicity campaigns through the electronic and print media.